



THE FARMER AND THE WEATHER

(Written Specially for The Bulletin)

Talking about the weather—"Great Scott!" you break in: "Who's talking about the weather?" Who? Well, everybody. And his wife. And his sisters and his cousins and his aunts.

It's the one topic of conversation which we all begin with, when we can't think of anything else to say, or when we think just "Hello" is too abrupt or "How's your mother-in-law?" too familiar and provocative.

It must be interesting also it wouldn't be so universal a topic. It must seem important to a vast majority of tongue-tonguing human beings, or they wouldn't accord it first place in their inter-communications.

Among farming folk, anyway, there is ample reason for this respect and attention paid to the subject. For, as the fabled geese was a slave to the lamp and its chance perch, so the farmer man is a slave to the weather and its chance manifestations. He may blow and plant and cultivate and harvest only when the weather permits. He doesn't know his eyes always fastened on the ground, for his first morning he looks up at the sky to see if it portends a fair day, and

his last observation at bed-time is again upwards for indications of tomorrow's chances.

When he talks about the weather, he is talking about the most important relation which Nature holds to him. It is "business" with him; it's anything in the universe is. For his whole chance of earning a living depends upon the favor of the weather-gods. When they frown loweringly and persistently his income dwindles nearer and nearer the vanishing point. When they smile propitiously, his hopes blossom and fruit. Why, then, shouldn't he talk about the weather, first last and most of the time? His living, indeed, his life may depend upon it. And "out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh," now as truly as two thousand years ago.

Kennan, the famous Siberian traveler, was once attacked by serious illness far out on the Siberian plains. He was compelled to take refuge in a Tartar tent. These Tartars are not farmers, but nomads, living on their flocks and herds. In their treeless land the only food attainable to cook their meat is dried camel-dung, which is scarce and, therefore, more precious than the meat itself. The sick man's host was hospitable enough and tended the sufferer with real solicitude. But his conversation, all day long and far into the night, was almost wholly devoted to the discussion of means for obtaining the only fuel he knew about. And Mr. Kennan drily remarks that, to a very sick man, helplessness, appetitelessness and abnormal quiescence, this continual dwelling upon the subject of camel-dung was not so very boring. But the fact that his own life and that of his host depended on a supply of that fuel nevertheless made it inevitably the latter's chief topic.

So it is with the farmer and the weather. When two city men meet, they may naturally have other subjects on their minds about which they are more conversant. But when two farmers foregather, it is generally the weather they have been thinking about before they met, and there is no reason why it shouldn't be the weather about which they first speak.

Generally, the tone of their conversation is more or less shaded with gloom, for the weather is seldom all that the farmer could desire. Especially last summer was this the case.

"Did I ever see such weather?" That was the daily greeting, and by it was meant that the weather was phenomenally sour and wet and cold; the season backward; and the crop prospects exceptionally poor. But this fall, while the expression had been about the same, the meaning has been quite different.

"Did I ever see such a fall?" That's the greeting now, and it means that the autumn has been a wonderfully favorable one, so far as weather is concerned. While it may be admitted that we shall never find everything just exactly right till we get to heaven, that fact need not hinder us from owning up that the present fall has been from the farmer's point

of view about as near perfect as we can expect on earth.

The exceptional and long-continued warmth had sufficed not only to save many crops which at one time seemed hopeless, but stimulate them to full normal production. Furthermore, it has enabled the husbandman to harvest them in unusually good condition. It would be hard to find adequate excuse for the farmer who, this fall, loses any really valuable crop through inability to garden it.

The papers are full of items about brat fruit saved far beyond the usual limit for them. On this hill farm, where we usually expect killing frosts not later than Sept. 25, I picked, October 26, ripe firm and delicious tomatoes, and eggplant. For a considerable time, we have been enjoying regular bi-weekly raspberry short cakes from our small patch of vines. Mrs. Farmer also finds occasional strawberries. I read, the other day, that a Troy, N. Y., fruit store had received several crates of fresh picked wild strawberries from the Adirondacks, where the guide reported that a second crop was coming on profusely.

Of course, we've all had trouble in getting help enough to save the crops which were matured, but so far as weather has been concerned we could hardly have found it more satisfactory if we'd had the making of it in our own hands. And it's a tribute to the underlying soundness of human feeling that most of us seem willing to admit this as we were to scratch over the bad weather of last summer.

Now, however, the turn is at hand. As long ago as October 14, a big snow storm raged over the southern part of Colorado. The breaking down wires, cutting in rows and absolutely blocking all communication with several towns. October 20 a light sprinkle of snow whitened the roofs of my own buildings. We may accept it as a fact that the farming season of 1920 is at last over.

Whereupon, in pursuance of one of the queerest traits of queer human nature, we're all beginning to speculate upon what sort of a winter is ahead of us. I can hardly pick up a paper without finding in it reported predictions of one or another weather prophet, affirming the character of the coming season. As usual one prophet predicts an open winter and one a severe winter. The rest of us can pay our money and take our choice.

Or—We can do what is much better and wiser; throw all the predictions of which we're sort into the fire and take what comes, when it comes.

Uncle Ike's philosophy of life fits the case to a T. "Always hope for the best and expect the worst." If we do that, we're not going to be seriously disappointed or fatally hurt, whichever way things turn out.

I seem to remember that a large majority of the weather prophets, both professional and amateur, predicted a year ago, that the winter of 1919-20 was going to be exceptionally open and mild. It turned out, as doesn't need to be repeated, the wildest and worst winter in human memory. There is no reason to doubt that most of the predictions made for the coming winter are just as wise, just as sure-footed, and just as trustworthy as those made a year ago for last winter.

Of course, under the law of chances, somebody is likely to guess right, once in a while. He is at the same time, just as likely to guess wrong. Even when he makes a right guess, there is no guarantee of a second stroke of luck following a second guess.

Long-distance weather prophecy is, at present, about the biggest waste of guesswork and good heads which a man can be capable of. When all the resources of the government and all its millions of expenditure can't enable the weather bureau to forecast tomorrow's weather right more than half the time, any attempt to predict the weather for six months ahead should be left to the inmates of asylums for the feeble-minded.

It is safe to say that we shall have a

winter. But neither the wise men of Gotham who went to sea in a bowl, nor the wise men of Norwich who by their and read anemometers, nor the seventh sons of seventh sons, nor Uncle Josiah of Rodunk nor Grandpa Jiggs of Hard-scrabble, nor George Jones nor Chippewa—none of them know or can tell what sort of winter it will be.

We shall all know when we get into it. And that time'll come soon enough, now. Heaven knows!

If we've got wood enough to keep the stoves going, and forage enough to keep the animals satisfied, and pork and potatoes and turnips and cabbages enough to sustain our own hands, we shall doubtless pull through it, however hard it may be.

In any case, this fall has been so kind-ly and so considerate of farm needs, that it will be the farmer's own fault if he isn't stocked up with enough for any old kind of winter.

And, the worse it is, the gladder we'll all be to welcome next spring!

THE FARMER

MYSTIC

Not since the armistice was signed has Mystic seen such a demonstration of enthusiasm as was called forth by the republican parade here Thursday evening. Accompanied by the band and with flags flying, several hundred men and women marched through the principal streets.

There were the usual transparencies and red fire all along the line. Houses were illuminated and decorated with flags. A miscellaneous shower was given on Tuesday evening by her friends for Miss Lucy Whitman, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Whitman of Grove avenue, whose marriage with Thomas Whittle will take place at an early date. About 20 were present. Refreshments were served.

Mrs. Julia S. Siles and Miss Sarah Fish of Norfolk and Mrs. Mary Cousins of Stonington were guests of Mrs. Frances Aiken this week.

Mr. and Mrs. Bergen I. Greene were visitors in Hopkinton Thursday. J. Clinton Fitch of the Hotel Clinton is driving a new sedan.

Mrs. Mary Burton is visiting relatives in Norwich.

The great colony here has been growing smaller gradually as the season has advanced, the latest one to leave being Mr. Barnes of Chicago, who with his wife has been staying several months at the Benjamin cottage. While here Mr. Barnes has done much work of local interest, particularly some attractive Quilmburg views. Mr. and Mrs. Barnes returned home this week.

Mr. and Mrs. W. George were callers in Westley Wednesday. Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Foote have returned from an automobile trip to Mount Vernon, where their son Oscar is attending school.

Cleveland White is moving from Quilmburg to Enders' Island, having entered the employ of Dr. Enders.

Amos H. Johnson attended the meeting of the Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary society of eastern Connecticut in Willimantic Wednesday were Mrs. Rowland H. Wilcox, Miss Hannah Miner and Mrs. F. Wilcox.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert S. Davis and Dr. and Mrs. L. M. Allen have returned after several days' automobile trip to Lowell, Plymouth, Concord and various points of interest in New England.

An enjoyable harvest supper and social given by the Royal Neighbors in Community hall was well attended, there being about 50 present.

Mr. Samuel S. Brown left Thursday for Brooklyn, N. Y., where he will spend the winter with his brother.

Mrs. George D. Johnson and daughter, Miss Edith Johnson, have returned from a trip to Hartford.

Miss Barbara McDonald has returned to New York to resume her duties as a teacher after a short stay at her home.

The November meeting of Panny Ledyard chapter, D. A. R., was held Wednesday afternoon in Masonic temple. Following the business meeting, refreshments were served by the following committee: Mrs. Adelaide McDonald, chairman, Mrs. Lena T. Chapman, Mrs. Mildred V. C. Wilbur, Mrs. Emeline M. Allen, Mrs. Rachel C. Burnett, Mrs. Ella E. G. Wheeler and Mrs. Marie N. Dickinson.

John H. Hoxie of Hartford was home to vote.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Lamphere of Watch Hill were guests of Daniel McGuire this week.

Men are painting the residence of Harry L. Raul on Pearl street.

Mrs. Laura E. Fuller was entertained at the home of her niece, the Misses Parker, at Mt. Parnassus last week.

Edwin H. Phelps is still confined to his bed, with no improvement in his condition.

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Ackley, Miss Ida Stark, Walter M. Gillette and Miss Gladys Stark, all of Chester, were in town Tuesday to cast their ballots.

A Halloween party was given at The Orchards Friday night. A large number attended and a delightful evening was spent. The matron, Miss Helen B. Wallis, with her assistant, Mrs. Catharine Miller, entertained very hospitably.

Mrs. Herbert Persner of Hartford and Mrs. William Beebe of Hadlyme were guests last Friday of Mrs. Harry Strong.

Mrs. D. Alexander is spending some time in Norwich.

CHAPLIN

Cynthia A. Lummis, 75, wife of Town Clerk Frank C. Lummis, died after a short illness at her home, Wednesday morning of the past week at 7 o'clock.

Mrs. Lummis was born in Hampton, Nov. 24, 1845, the daughter of Alfred and Cynthia Storer Hammond. Besides her husband she is survived by one brother, Irvin W. Hammond of Hampton.

The funeral was largely attended at the Congregational church Friday afternoon at 1:30. Rev. Walter E. Lamphere, pastor of the church conducting the impressive service and paid a high tribute to the life that had shown such a sweet spirit of devotion and helpfulness in all branches of church and community work.

Rev. William M. Brown of Windham also spoke comforting words and eulogized the Christian devotion of a most worthy life. A quartette, Rev. W. E. Lamphere, J. Wilbur Lamphere, W. B. Gallup and D. M. Welch sang Nearer My God to Thee, Ave Maria, and Rev. Percy W. Back of Boston sang with tender expression, Does Jesus Care. There were beautiful tributes of flowers from relatives and friends. The Ladies' Aid Society and the Woman's Missionary society each sent a floral form. The bearers were Andrew M. Grant, Frank M. Martin, Clifford J. Church and W. B. Gallup. Burial was in the new cemetery at South Chaplin, this being the first body buried in the new cemetery.

Mrs. Lummis will be sadly missed in this home, the church and the community.

Rev. Percy W. Back of Boston is holding special evangelistic services at the church, evenings at 7:30. Four meetings were held the past week. Rev. Mr. Back preached at both morning and evening services Sunday. Meetings are being held this week from Tuesday until Friday evening. Mr. Back will close his labors here Sunday next. He is a strong speaker and brings a great message. Mr. Back is a fine singer and the musical part of the meetings is a highly enjoyed.

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able feature. Mr. and Mrs. Hubert S. Blake of New Britain and Mrs. Edgar S. Lincoln of Waterbury were callers among friends in town Saturday. The sacrament will be observed at the church next Sunday.

WINDHAM

Judge Otto Robinson of Willimantic was at the chapel Saturday evening and gave instruction in voting to those women recently made voters. There were about 40 women present.

Mr. and Mrs. Homer Wood have as their guests Mr. Wood's mother, Mrs. Delazon Wood, his sister, Mrs. Machia and her son and daughter of Vermont.

Mrs. Heary Bingham was in Hartford over Sunday. Mrs. Edward Whiting Johnson, who has been at the Inn for two weeks, returned to her home in Norwich Monday.

Miss Dorothy Weir was in charge of an informal tea at the library Saturday afternoon. Miss Anna Claassen presided.

Mrs. H. C. Lathrop's Sunday school class of girls is to hold a food sale for the benefit of the Near East Relief.

Rev. and Mrs. A. W. Clifford and children have gone to Boston this week. Mr. Clifford returns on Friday but the others will remain for two weeks' visit with relatives.

A crowd of small boys celebrated Halloween Saturday night to their own satisfaction. The ringing of door bells, placing of tick tacks and stunts of that nature are harmless pranks, but when it comes to carrying away and damaging property it is a different matter.

Gen. Theodore Bingham, whose wife died recently on board a steamer returning from Europe, is a cousin of Miss Josephine Bingham, has visited Windham several times, and has made gifts of valuable books and maps to the library.

Commencing next Sunday, Nov. 7, the service here will be held at 11:15 a. m. 15 minutes later than at present. This change is made to accommodate the South Windham branch church whose



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members find the hour of 3.30 too early for them. The consecration meeting of the C. E. society will be held at 7:30 the leader being Marguerite Cook. The Thursday evening prayer will be led by Rev. W. B. Brown in the absence of the pastor.

Mrs. John M. Palmer celebrated her 55th birthday Monday. Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Hatch left Tuesday the 9th, to spend the winter in Winter Haven, Fla.

UNION

Major John Buckley of Hartford was home for the week end.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Palmer of Hartford spent the week end at the Marcy home.

William P. Marcy has returned to Hartford for the winter. In some localities no frosts have hit

the garden to kill the plants and flowers for them. The consecration meeting of the C. E. society will be held at 7:30 the leader being Marguerite Cook. The Thursday evening prayer will be led by Rev. W. B. Brown in the absence of the pastor.

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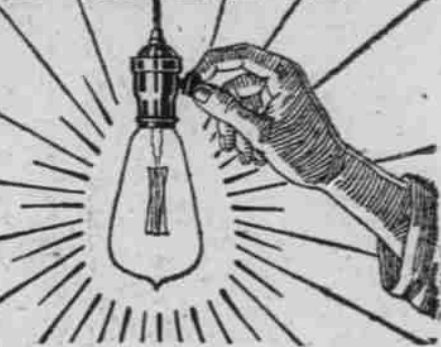
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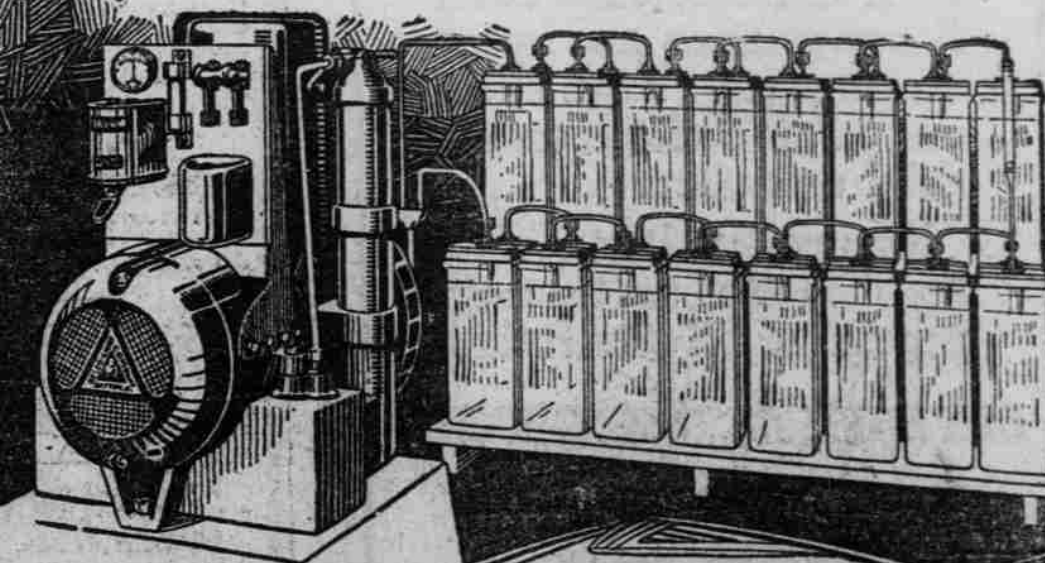
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